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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 005966

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PPD, IIP/T/GIC-GSTEELE, IIP/T/PS  
- TERRY SCOTT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [PROP](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: PROGRAM REQUEST: PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE  
JORDANIAN MEDIA

REF: AMMAN 07718 99, AMMAN 05986 00, AMMAN 07718 01

1. This is an action request for IIP. See para 6

2. In view of the success to date of Embassy Amman's "Media Professionalization Program," which has had a visible impact on the quality of the work of a number of Jordanian journalists, Amman seeks the Department's assistance in continuing the program and developing a new series of workshops for FY 2003. Proposed workshop topics are intended to raise the professional standard of Jordanian journalists and serve mission objectives by encouraging continued engagement with local media.

3. Justification: more than ten years into its declared process of democratization, Jordan has not yet resolved the classic dilemma: how to allow a greater degree of media freedom while maintaining control in an often unpredictable political environment. During the past year alone the government enacted a new emergency amendment to the press and publications law, created then froze the Higher Media Council, and announced then abandoned plans to eliminate the Ministry Of Information. All this reflects the importance and timeliness of the issue of media freedom in Jordan. But real progress towards press freedom is only possible in the context of a skilled and responsible press. Jordan's journalists suffer from low pay and poor command of English, which prevent them from accessing available resources for research and reporting, a lack of relevant training and education, and little to no experience of international standards of reporting.

4. PA Amman plans to conduct a series of three speaker/specialist programs, each lasting approximately 3-4 days. The workshops would take place during the period December 2002-April 2003. The target audience is working mid-career or junior Jordanian journalists. American workshop leaders would be accomplished journalists with field experience rather than pure academics. We have found it effective to locate high caliber specialists and use translation rather than rely on a limited pool of Arabic speaking specialists, though a qualified Arabic speaker would always be welcome.

5. Specific program topics: post would like to propose the following topics for the three programs. IIP project officer and post program officer can expand on the titles together via e-mail.

-- Feature/ analytical writing.

Mission objective: Promoting better analytical skills, and hence a more accurate and balanced presentation of U.S. policies.

Skills: Learning the difference between analysis and opinion writing. How to research a feature article, with emphasis on understanding the need for various viewpoints in developing an accurate picture of the subject matter. The difference between writing a news report, an analytical article, and an opinion piece.  
Desired date: December 2002

-- Credibility in reporting

Mission objective: promoting higher professional standards in journalism.

Skills: the need to check and double-check information, quoting sources accurately, respecting the difference between information given on the record, off the record, or on background, resisting the temptation to insert subjective opinion in a straight reporting piece when addressing questions to an interviewee.  
Desired date: February 2003

-- Covering Elections.

Mission objective: promoting democracy.

Skills: polling, analyzing election issues, and analyzing candidates' and parties' election strategies.  
Note: This workshop would be particularly effective in April 2003, since Jordan has officially announced that parliamentary elections would be held in Spring 2003,

which it defined as extending till the end of June.  
Desired date: April 2003

16. Post seeks assistance in identifying speakers, establishing initial contact with them, and arranging the logistics of their visit to Amman. We welcome arranging these programs in coordination with other posts in the region to reduce costs to individual posts. Materials are extremely important for the kind of participatory workshops envisioned. When chosen, speakers/specialists should be asked to forward to PA select handout materials and books for use in their sessions (materials available electronically can be downloaded and prepared locally at post). Post-translated and produced materials can also be made available to other posts, if desired.

17. Program officer is: Information Officer Justin Siberell. Contact information: (Tel.) 962-6-592-0101 x2618; (Fax) 962-6-5928932; (E-mail) jsiberell@pd.state.gov  
Post thanks IIP in advance. GNEHM